

SEPTEMBER 1993

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat *Incorporated*

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting	September 3	Box and Ironbark Forests - Mr B Traill
Meeting	October 1	Hakeas - Ms H Blackney
Excursion	September 5	Inverleigh Common - Mr G Baverstock and Mr L Conole
Excursion	October 3	Brisbane Ranges - Mr L Fink and Dr F Harrap



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Meetings as specified are held
at the School of Mines and
Industries, Lydiard Street Sth,
Art Building, commencing at 7.30
p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED,
COMMENCE FROM BOOK CITY, cnr
STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS, BALLARAT
at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTING
OR at 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY.

Field Reports: August Meeting

Helen Burgess: Masked Lapwing in Norman Street

Ken McDonnell: An area a Creswick forest which was burnt last year has Blue Pincushion and Chocolate Lily flowering already and Lomandra will bloom soon.

Lyndsay Fink: Flock of 50+ Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at MtClear.

Frank Harrap: Flock of 200 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at MtClear - the largest seen for about 8 years. Peregrine Falcon flying over MtHelen.

Pat Murphy: *Correa reflexa* is beautiful in the Brisbane Ranges at present. Some flowers are longer than at Enfield and there is a wide range of colours including yellow, green and apricot.



Diary Dates

Sunday 5th September: Inverleigh Common Excursion, 9.30am BookCity; 10.30am Carpark opposite Teesdale General Store.

Sunday 19th September: Maryborough Excursion, 9.30am BookCity, 10.30am Goldfields Restaurant Carpark on Maryborough-Ballarat road.

Barry Trainor will show us some hollows for those keen to climb up a ladder and other Maryborough FNC members will guide land lovers.

18-19 September: Angair Wildflower Show, Anglesea Hall.

15-17 October: WVFNCA Campout, Mt Arapiles. Details from Secretary.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Monday 13 September
at 7.30pm at Pat Murphy's house - 1320 Dana St.

ORCHIDS of the BALLARAT DISTRICT.

No. 11 of a series.

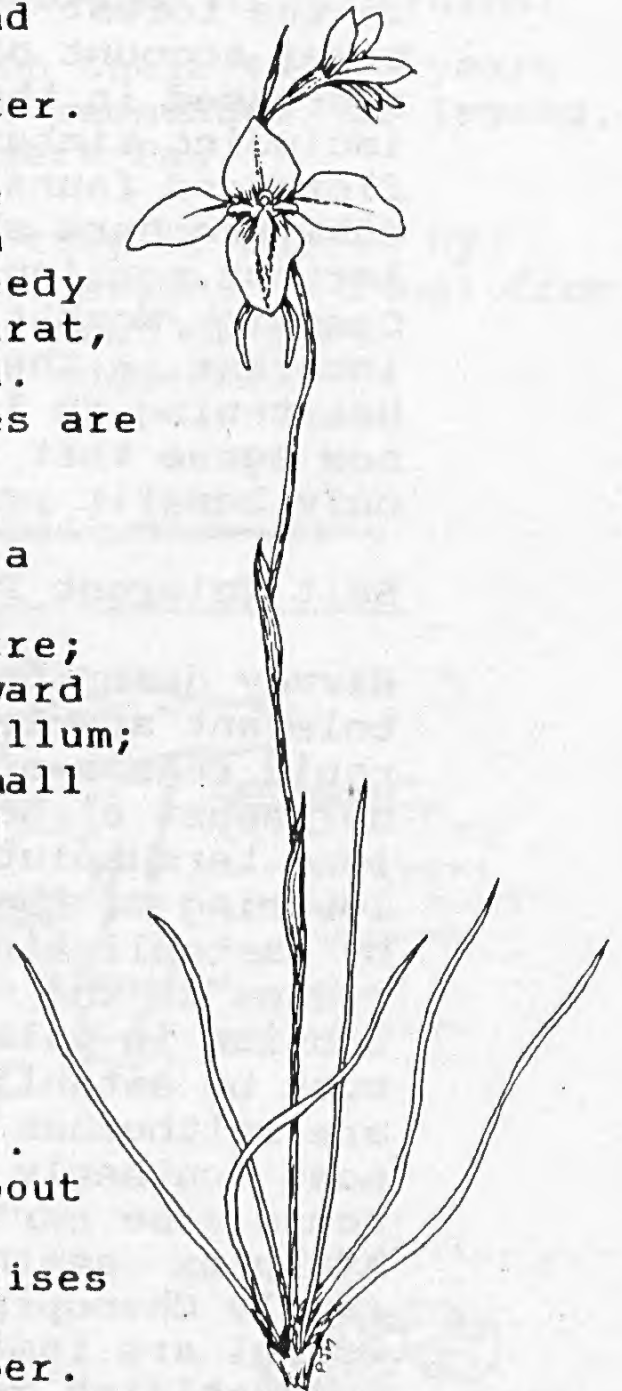
Botanical Name: *Diuris lanceolata*
(previous name: *Diuris pedunculata*)

Common Names: Golden Moths,
Snake Orchid,
Yellow Cowslip

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This pretty orchid is widespread in the Ballarat district where it can be found in grassland, heathland or open forest, especially in places where it is damp in winter. It usually occurs singly or in small groups, but it may also be seen growing in great profusion along some of our grassy and reedy roadsides to the south of Ballarat, e.g. at Cape Clear and Rokewood.

The 3 to 7 grasslike leaves are narrow, glabrous and about 10 to 15 cms long; the flowers, 1 to 4, on slender stems, are a clear bright yellow with muted brownish markings near the centre; the lateral sepals spread downward along the underside of the labellum; the labellum is 3-lobed, the small side lobes are markedly toothed and the larger mid-lobe ovate lanceolate with 2 definite furry yellow ridges rising from the base and continuing for a short distance to become a single ridge towards the tip; the lateral petals tend to nod. The plant usually reaches to about 20cms high in this district.

Diuris lanceolata hybridises with some other *Diuris* species.
Flowering time: August to October.



PJM.

MEMBERS NIGHT
(August 6 1993)

Midlands Forest Management Plan

Andrew MacLean

Andrew MacLean of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Ballarat, is coordinating public participation in the forest management plan. He gave us a brief account of the issues that are being addressed in the formulation of the plan including timber production, water supply, flora and fauna, recreation and tourism. The DCNR brochure shows the Midlands area, the largest continuous forest block being Creswick/Wombat. FNCR members showed a keen interest in the planning issues and it was heartening to learn that professional foresters now agree that timber production is not the only benefit provided by a forest.

Salt Tolerant Plants - Harvey Hooper

Harvey described his search to identify salt tolerant species that could be used for the rapid repair of gullied and eroded areas to the northeast of Ballarat, eg. Amphitheatre. The long term solution to salination/erosion is the lowering of the water table in the valley areas by establishing forests on the slopes and ridges of the recharge areas. However to stop erosion in salt affected land, ground cover must be established. The most likely species are saltbushes. Harvey has been looking for the most southerly occurrence of saltbush, and has found some north of Glenthompson, including *Atriplex semibaccata* (creeping saltbush), and family *Chenopiaceae*. Other plants that may be useful are family *Haloragaceae* (raspworks), an unidentified *melaleuca* and sub clover.

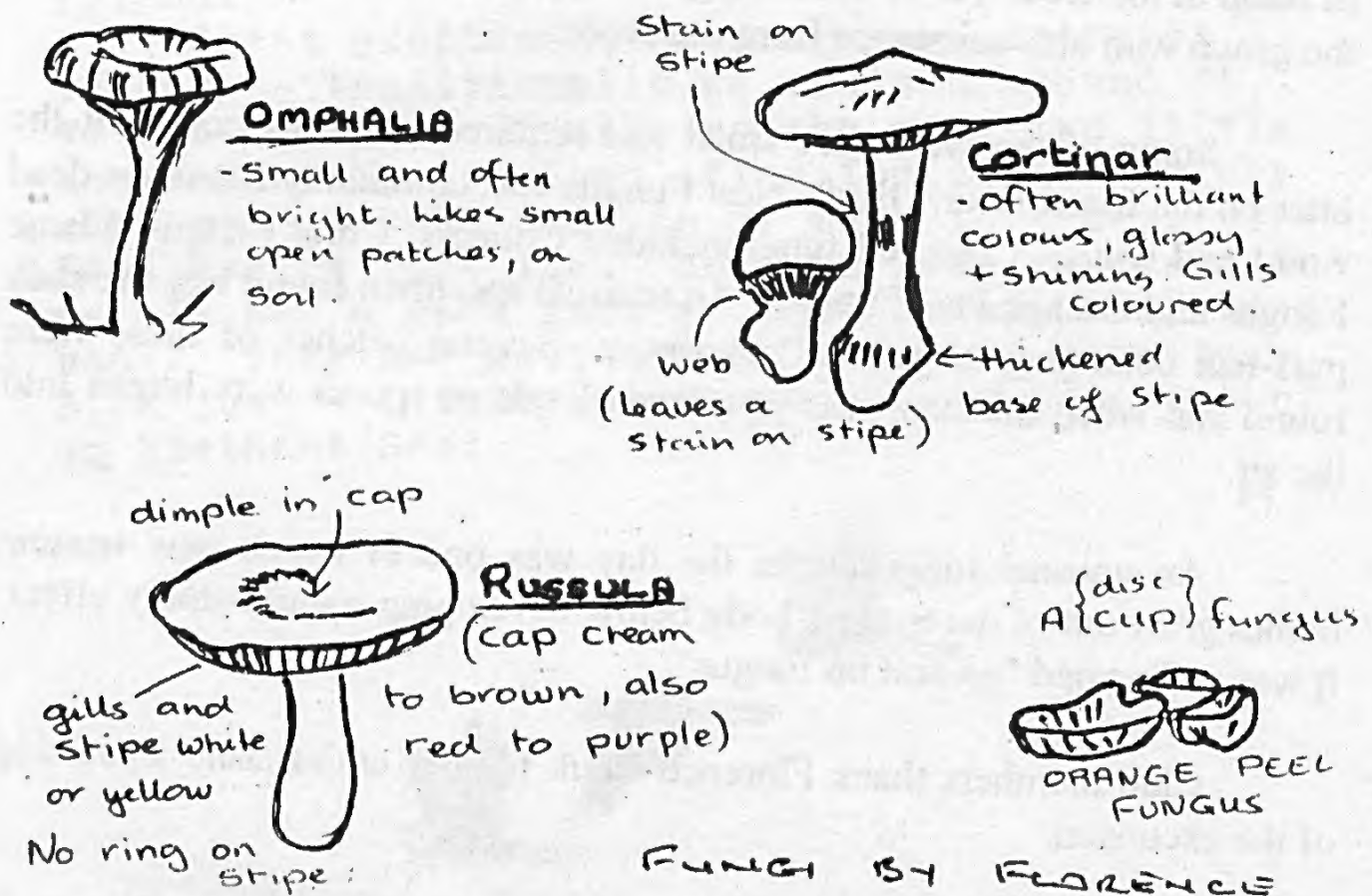
Farne Islands (UK North Sea) - Ken McDonnell

Ken showed slides of a visit to the islands in June 93 - including grey seals, guillemots, shags and puffins.

Maragaret Tonkin gave a brief talk on the Black Rhino of Zimbabwe which are becoming scarce - their numbers being lost to poaching. There is a program to dehorn the rhino to make them less attractive to poachers but this does not seem to have been effective.

Lyndsay Fink showed a collection of Aboriginal artefacts and some books on their 40,000 years of history and culture. He recounted, as legend, the origins of Sturt's Desert Pea.

Other displays included a tray of shells by Florence Williamson, colour slides of fungi from the McDonnells and a birds nest of wire coathangers and other wire oddments.



EXCURSION TO NATIONAL HERBARIUM

Wednesday 17 November 93.

The staff of the Herbarium have set a limit of 15 people for this visit. Hiring a bus was considered by the committee but the cost was too high. Travel will be by private car. To book a place let John Gregurke know at the September or October meeting.

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly we have to record the passing of Nancy Kearath on 6 August 1993. Nancy was a member for many years and will be sadly missed.

Local Fungi Excursion

Sunday 8th August, 1993

The August excursion took members to the Creswick Forest near the Koala Park. Florence Chuk visited the area the previous week and had prepared excellent diagrams and descriptions of 12 easily identified varieties of fungi in the area. All of these fungi were quickly found and identified by the group with able assistance from our leader.

Some of the were very small and required close inspection of the litter on the forest floor. Bird's Nest Fungus was commonly found on dead wood and twigs. Coloured fungi included Cotinars, Coral Fungus, Flame Fungus and Orange Peel Fungus. An unusual specimen found was the stalk puff-ball belonging to genus *Calostoma*. Several patches of these were found and when the stem was squeezed clouds of spores were blown into the air.

An unusual fungi late in the day was one in which new fruiting bodies grew out of the fruiting body below developing a multi-storey effect. It was nicknamed "up and up fungus".

Club members thank Florence Chuk for her enthusiastic leadership of the excursion.

LORDS OF ANTARCTICA (continued)

The katabatic winds were blowing as we approached Heard Is. and we tried three areas for the helicopters to take off. We had mail for the five scientists and the Captain wanted to get the mail ashore. It was decided to take only one helicopter with the mail and some members of the Century Club (folk who have visited more than 100 countries). We Aussies were to have our turn later. All went well despite the treacherous winds and the passengers had 5 minutes ashore. Big Ben, a snow covered peak of 2745m, dominates the island and controls the weather. We were told that the day before it was clam and clear. We were lucky to see about half the peak below the cloud.

While we were at sea we had lectures and videos relating to the Antarctic. Although the Kapitan Khebnikov was not designed for paying passengers there was a small lecture theatre - large enough for the 70 passengers. There was a Bar and Library allowing segregation of the smokers and non-smokers. There were a couple of socials including passengers and crew. Although there was a language barrier the crew were very friendly.

Great excitement when we saw our first iceberg - traditionally we cruised around it. We had a lecture featuring the rare and little known Ross Seal. Soon after the lecture a cry went up - a Ross Seal as if made to order. The Seal was on pack ice. Engines were reversed and we all had a good look at this plump, shapeless seal. They are solitary animals and grow to 3.3m just a little larger than half the size of an Elephant Seal.

H.B



Yellow Bellied Glider (Petaurus australis)

This is the largest of the Petaurids, the most vocal and the most capable glider, it's long fluffy tail is carried in an almost feline manner. The common name is not always apt as it goes from creamy white to yellowish (mature).

It is restricted to tall Eucalypts in temperate to sub tropical forests, it's patchy distribution may be due to the local availability of available overlapping and suitable flowering trees, providing blossom over the greater part of the year.

The staple diet consists of nectar, pollen and the sap obtained by biting out patches of bark on suitable trees sometimes leaving them very scarred. The Yellow Bellied Glider has a distinct call, a loud shriek beginning at a high note and ending with a throaty rattle.

Males and females appear the same, they are gregarious, in groups of one dominant male and up to five other females and infants, scent exchange between groups is from a gland on the back of the head of one to a spot under the tail. They share a den in a hollow and carry leaves in their coiled tails to the nest. Females have three nipples in the pouch which is completely divided into two compartments by a longitudinal septum. A single young is born and is carried in the pouch for 100 days. It is left in the nest for a further 60 days, mortality is high at this time due, no doubt to the dominant male, it then feeds for itself.

It is rare and limited in its habitat the nearest to Ballarat is the Otway Forest.

There are two subspecies.

Elfin

